

197.
A
FULL AND AUTHENTIC
A C C O U N T
O F
K
JOHN WILLIAMSON,

Who was executed in *Moorfields*,
On *Monday* the Nineteenth of *January*, 1767,

FOR THE
MURDER OF HIS WIFE,

By imprisoning and cruelly treating her, and
denying her proper Sustenance.

CONTAINING,
A particular and exact Narrative of WILLIAMSON's
inhuman Treatment of his unhappy Wife, and
of the Varieties of Misery which he forced her to
endure; and also an Account of his Execution.

Together with
An ORIGINAL LETTER, written by WILLIAMSON after
he was taken up; and also a VINDICATION of him,
written by HIMSELF.

L O N D O N:
Printed for W. LEE, Publisher, near *Cripplegate*; and
J. COOKE, in *Pater-noster-Row*.

M D C C L X V I I .

198

TRUE AND AUTHENTIC
A. C. C. O. U. N. T.

JOHN WILLIAMSON

Who was executed in 1804

On the 1st of January 1804

FOR THE

MURDER OF HIS WIFE

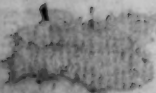
and



As the said John Williamson was
found guilty of the murder of his wife
and was executed in 1804
the following is a list of the
witnesses who were present at the execution

A list of the names of the witnesses
who were present at the execution
of John Williamson in 1804

L O N D O N





A
FULL AND AUTHENTIC
A C C O U N T
O F
John Williamson, &c.

JOHN WILLIAMSON, the unhappy subject of this narrative, was born about the year 1720, in Tenter-Alley, Little-Moor-fields. His parents, who were in mean circumstances, after causing him to be instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, brought him up to the business of a shoemaker, which he afterwards exercised for many years, as a journeyman, with a very fair character. It cannot be expected, that in the life of a man in this situation, there should have been any circumstances sufficiently remarkable to attract the notice

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or

or attention of the public. There were not: nor would John Williamson have been ever known to the world, had not his unexampled cruelty to an unfortunate woman, whose greatest misfortune was to be his wife, brought him into public view. Had it not been for this, the unhappy man might have gone on to the end of his days in a peaceful and humble, but innocent obscurity. It is sufficient to say, that, before he was married to his last wife, he bore the character of an honest, laborious, and pains-taking man. Nay, he was even esteemed a very humane man; and to his first wife (by whom he had several children) was considered as a tender husband, and very careful of his family. He was, however, sometimes reduced to great poverty: nor need it be wondered at in the present times, when the poor are in many instances so greatly distressed, that a man in no better situation than that of a journeyman shoemaker, should be sometimes extremely indigent. However, when his circumstances were thus unfavourable, he still shewed much regard to his family. And Mrs. Sarah Berry, who appeared to his character on his trial, and with whom he lodged one year and an half, during the life of his first wife, deposed upon oath, That

That she has known him, when he had but one pennyworth of bread, walk out into the fields, and leave it to his wife and children.

If this representation of the character of Williamson be a true one (and that it is a true one, at least in one part of his life, was solemnly declared by several persons), how difficult is it to conceive, that such a person should be guilty of a cool, deliberate act of cruelty, of a murder of the most barbarous kind? And yet that this unhappy man was guilty of this, there is not the shadow of a doubt. It would, indeed, be utterly incredible, did it not appear, from the history of mankind, that the same man, at different times, and in different circumstances, is often amazingly different from himself. But it may likewise be observed, that there have been many men, who have been able, for a long series of time, to conceal their real characters from all around them, and to pass in the world for much better men than in fact they were.

JOHN WILLIAMSON had not been married to Anne, his late unhappy wife, above eight months at the time of her death. She was subject to fits, and of a very weak understanding; and there is the utmost rea-

son to believe, that the sole motive which induced Williamson to marry her, was a sum of money that she had, which had been left to her by her friends, and which was deposited in the hands of a worthy gentleman for her use. However, Williamson, who was considerably older than she was, and who had known her from a child, found means to prevail on her to marry him : but how little regard he at first had for her, sufficiently appears from this circumstance, that when he had lain with her only two or three times, they parted beds. However, notwithstanding their laying in separate beds, he behaved to her in a tolerable manner in other respects for about three weeks, permitting her to eat and drink with him, and treating her with some degree of sociability. But from that time he began to treat her worse and worse : one reason assigned for which was, that when she was in any of those fits, with which she was frequently troubled, or going into them, she would sometimes frighten his children ; he having three living, whom he had by his first wife. Another reason assigned for his beginning to ill treat her, was, that she would go and speak ill of him to the other persons who lived in the same house ; for that

that he lived in, which was in Tenter-Alley, Little-Moorfields, was let out into tenements.

Soon after these instances of misbehaviour in Williamson's wife had happened, and other trifling ones of the same kind, either real or pretended, when they had been married about two months, he took it into his head to tie a rope round her body, and with that, and a staple, he fastened her to a post by the bedstead: and in this manner, like a criminal, he used to confine her when he went out. But not content with treating her in this hard and severe manner, he shortly after went to Woodstreet Compter, and there purchased a pair of iron hand-cuffs: and from this time it was his custom to hand-cuff her when he went out. So that, thus confined, she was incapable of assisting herself in any of the ordinary and necessary calls of nature; but was, at such times, obliged to apply for assistance to Mercy Williamson, a girl about fifteen years of age, daughter to her husband by his first wife; or to Anne Cole, wife to another journeyman shoemaker, but who used to be frequently in Williamson's apartment. When he went out, and left her thus hand-cuffed, it was not customary with him

him to fasten her by the rope and staple to the post : and, therefore, one day in September 1766, she went down stairs into a room belonging to Mr. Farrington, who lodged in the same house, having at that time her hands confined behind her with the hand-cuffs. She then asked Mrs. Farrington, who was in the room, to untie a knot : upon which the latter, looking at the hand-cuffs, said, “ Lord have mercy “ upon me ! they are iron.” But Anne Williamson told her, that if she would take a nail, or a fork, she might undo them ; for Mr. Williamson, she said, used to undo them with such a thing. Upon this Mr. Farrington, who was likewise there, got a piece of a file, and with that he and his wife endeavoured to undo the hand-cuffs. But being unable to do this, Anne Williamson said, “ I must go up “ then, and stay in misery as I am, till he “ comes home :” and which she accordingly did.

Before Williamson proceeded to that rigorous treatment of his wife, of which we have just spoken, namely, sometimes fastening and confining her to a post, and at other times hand-cuffing her, he would frequently beat her, and sometimes tie her up for that purpose. She once went, about

August

August 1766, when she was not confined, to the house of the Rev. Mr. St——ns in Hoxton Square, her husband being then with her. However, she there complained of her husband's beating her; upon which some remonstrances being made to Williamson, he said to that gentleman's maid, that he would not strike her any more, but “would find out some new punishment for her.” And from his subsequent behaviour it appears, that fastening her to the post, and hand-cuffing her, was the *new punishment* which he then intended, or at least a part of it.

She was often heard to cry out with his beating her, by persons who lodged in the house; and she was frequently heard to be thrown down with such a degree of violence, that her falls shook the ceiling. Mrs. Farrington, a lodger in the house, who hath been already mentioned, once heard Anne Williamson cry out, at a time when Anne Cole was there, “Pray, Mrs. Cole, for God's sake, don't let him use me so.” Anne Cole's reply was, “How can I help it? what would you have me to do?”

The other lodgers in the house would sometimes expostulate with Williamson, on account of his cruelty to his wife, and with which

which they were in some degree acquainted by her frequent outcries. But at such times he would either answer them, that they knew not what a worthless creature she was; or otherwise abuse those who complained to him upon this subject. He was once told, that he had better put her in the workhouse, than treat her in the manner he did. His reply was, that, "if the committee and he could agree, he would." And being asked, why he did not take her to his bed, as other men did their wives, he answered, that "she swarmed with vermin in such a manner, that he could not come near her."

Williamson was not content with using his wife in the cruel manner which we have already related, but he now proceeded to practise a new scheme of barbarity; which was of such a nature, that it almost leads us to conclude, that the man who was the author of it, could never have been possessed of the common feelings of humanity, whatever appearances of that nature he might sometimes assume.

This new method of torturing his unhappy wife, was as follows. In a closet in the room in which they lived, he drove a large staple, somewhat higher than her waist; and to that staple he tied a cord,
with

with which he, as it were, hung her up by the middle to the staple; having first put her hands behind her, and hand-cuffed her. He also contrived to put the cord thro' the hand-cuffs, and then drew it up to a nail over her head. As the staple in the wall of the closet, to which she was fastened, was somewhat higher than her waist, she could not touch the ground with her heels, but was fastened up, as it were, on tip toe. This rendered her posture and situation much more painful and uneasy, than it would have been, if her feet had fairly touched the ground. But notwithstanding this, her inhuman husband would not permit any thing to be put under her feet, of which she was extremely desirous, in order to render her situation somewhat easier: but Williamson would often threaten to beat his daughter, if she attempted any thing of that kind.

One of the reasons assigned by this cruel man for the barbarous treatment of his wife, was, that when she was at liberty, she would go to the other lodgers in the house, and beg victuals of them; though he, as he pretended, furnished her with a sufficiency of food, and as much as she could eat. This, he said, was a great scandal to him. But, notwithstanding Williamson's pretences, when his subsequent behaviour to this unfortunate woman is considered, there can be little reason to doubt, but that her complaints on this head from the first were generally well founded.

On the 2d of September 1766, Williamfon received of the Reverend Mr. St——ns, of Hoxton Square, the fum of fixty-one pounds ten fhillings, which had been depofited in that gentleman's hands for the ufe of Anne Williamfon. Mr. St——ns had received fome intimation that Williamfon often beat his wife, and otherwife very ill-treated her; for which he feverely reprov'd him. And we are told, that, a few days before the payment of the money, this gentleman offered to take the poor creature from her husband Williamfon for ever, and to ufe his endeavours to get her into the parifh workhoufe, on the following conditions, namely, Mr. St——ns would have given Williamfon thirty pounds, and all the plate belonging to his wife, which was fomewhat confiderable, provided Williamfon would agree that the other money fhould be given with her into the parifh. But this he abfolutely refufed to comply with; nor would he fuffer his unfortunate wife to fpeak to Mr. St——ns alone, though fhe confidered that gentleman as her beft friend.

About the latter end of October, one Mrs. Anne Hart, who was acquainted both with Williamfon and his wife, having occafion to get a letter written for a friend, went for that purpofe, accompanied by her husband and another man, to the apartment of John Williamfon, who wrote a good hand, and with much more correctnefs than is ufual for perfons in his fituation. Accordingly, they found Williamfon at home, who agreed to write the letter, and to go to the Magpye in Bifhopsgate-ftreet, to fpend the evening. Anne Williamfon was now at liberty; for it was not customary with him at this time to faften her to the ftaple in the clofet, except when he went out. But when fhe found her husband was going out with Mr. and Mrs. Hart,

Hart, being terrified with the thoughts of her approaching punishment, she put her hands together, and addressing herself to Mrs. Hart, said, "For God's sake, Mrs. Hart, beg of my husband not to hand-cuff me, and tie me up, and I will be very good." Mrs. Hart then said, "Pray, Mr. Williamson, do not confine your wife, or tie her up." He answered, "I know best what I have to do: I shall do it." The unhappy woman then said, "If I am to be tied up, Mrs. Hart, beg that I may have some tea in the morning." Williamson replied, That was as she behaved; and then told Mr. and Mrs. Hart, and the other man, that if they would go down stairs, he would follow them in ten minutes. The two men accordingly went down; but Mrs. Hart staid, and said, "Mr. Williamson, I do insist upon seeing in what manner you confine your wife." In this Williamson acquiesced; and accordingly went to the other side of the room, and fetched the iron hand-cuffs, which he shewed to Mrs. Hart, and said, "The b—ch has broke the lock of them." Mrs. Hart asked him what he did with them: but, without making any answer to that question, he went and undid the closet door, which was fastened with a button. He then bid his wife turn round, which she readily did, putting her hands behind her back: for he had so awed and terrified her by his rigours and severities, that she dared not to make the least opposition to whatever he commanded, however painful and uneasy to herself. Williamson then hand-cuffed her, and with a rope drew her up tight to the staple, in the manner that is before described. When he was drawing her up, she cried out, "Oh! Mr. Williamson, Oh! Mr. Williamson, you draw me so tight, you'll cut my hands asunder." Williamson said she always made that noise; but if she did not hold her tongue, he

would knock her head against the wall. He then went down stairs, and there being no body in the room but Mrs. Hart and Mercy Williamson, the daughter, the unhappy woman, who was fastened in the closet, asked Mrs. Hart to give her a pinch of snuff; which she accordingly did, and also wiped the poor creature's nose, which she was incapable of doing herself, on account of her being handcuffed. Anne Williamson then desired Mrs. Hart, to ask her husband's daughter to let her have a little stool that stood by the fire, to put under her feet. Mrs. Hart accordingly spoke to the girl for that purpose; but she made answer, that she dared not; for if she did, her father would beat her. Upon this, Mrs. Hart said, she would put the stool under her herself, which she accordingly did: and Anne Williamson, though still fastened to the staple, then stood upright; and was very thankful for this piece of service, saying she was now much easier. When Mrs. Hart returned to Williamson, her husband, and the other man, she said, "Mr. Williamson, don't be angry with your daughter on account of the stool being put under your wife's feet; for I put it under myself." Williamson replied, "I will break every bone in my daughter's skin for letting you put it under; for the b—ch will get out of the closet."

It was within a few days of this, that one of the lodgers in the house heard Williamson's daughter cry out, "Pray, father, dear father, for God's sake, don't do it." Williamson was then heard to answer, "D—n her, a b—ch, I will." Upon this the person called up stairs, and asked, whether he was murdering the woman, beseeching him to consider what he was about, and telling him he might repent when it was too late. Williamson replied, "Your counsel is very good; but if I do any thing amiss, I am to answer for it myself."

And

And he was not content with tying her up to the staple, hand cuffing her, and beating her, but he would frequently throw water in her face, when she was fastened up in the closet; and would oblige his daughter to do the same, though much against the girl's will; for she sometimes refused to do it, though she thereby incurred his displeasure.

Anne Williamson had hitherto been fastened up to the staple in the closet, in the manner before described, at certain times, when her husband thought proper, by way of punishment; and at all times when he went out. But she was released at intervals; and her husband then let her have such food as he thought proper, though that appears to have been but a scanty proportion. But he now seems to have formed a design to bring her to her end, though by slow degrees, and in the most cruel and inhuman manner: for, from about the middle of November till the middle of December, the space of four weeks, or somewhat more, it appears that he kept her hand-cuffed, and fastened up to the staple in the closet, in the uneasy situation before described, her feet not coming to the ground, without allowing her any interval of ease. He would not permit her to be let down, during that time, either to go to bed, to eat or drink, or to obey any of the most necessary or urgent calls of nature. As she was much afflicted with fits, she sometimes had four or five in a day, while she was confined in this miserable manner: but the inhuman Williamson would not permit her to be unloosed, or let down, on account of them. With respect to food, the little he furnished her with was in the following manner. He caused a slice of bread and butter, from a threepenny loaf, to be placed every day on a shelf in the closet, which was of such a height, that though she was fastened to the staple, she could reach it with her mouth:

for

for as she was hand-cuffed, as well as tied to the wall, she could eat of the bread and butter no other way. And in this miserable manner, without the use of her hands, and without assistance from others, was this unhappy wretch obliged to eat all she did for the space of a month. She could not, however, eat much; for enough was not allowed her for the sustenance of nature; scarce any thing but a single slice of bread and butter daily, during the whole time of which we are now speaking. That was her stated allowance: but it is said that she was permitted to eat a few morsels of meat left by her husband, twice or thrice within the space of about a month.

As to drink, they used to hold water to her mouth while she drank; for she never could drink any sort of beer: but, it is said, that when she was at liberty, she would drink drams, if she could get them. While she was thus cruelly fastened up and confined during the last month, the little assistance which she had, was chiefly from Williamson's daughter and Anne Cole. She would sometimes ask for more food than was allowed her, notwithstanding her uneasy situation in other respects, and the painful manner in which she must eat it: but Williamson would reply, that, "if she had not had enough, she should have no more; for she worked for none." And when Williamson dined, it was his custom to have the door of the closet shut upon his wife, till he had done.

This worse than savage treatment, it was impossible that an human creature could long endure. On Sunday the 14th of December, she being so very weak and low, that she could scarcely be heard to speak, Williamson permitted her to be let down to have some dinner. When she was loosened from the staple, so that she might stand upon the ground, she staggered very much, and was obliged to lay
hold

hold of things in the room to keep herself from falling. She afterwards sat down upon some rags in the closet, where some of the meat, which they then had for dinner, was brought to her on a plate. Her hand-cuffs were taken off; but her hands were so numbed and swelled, that it was with difficulty she used the knife and fork. She eat only two or three mouthfuls, and then said she could eat no more. When she had done, she desired to come to the fire, which Williamson permitted her to do. When she had been there about half an hour, she began to swarm with vermin. She thereupon endeavoured to kill some of them; but Williamson said, "Don't sit throwing them about here, but get into your kennel." She then returned back to the closet, holding by the wall to support herself. She complained that she was very cold, and said, that she had a pain in her stomach. About four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day (Sunday), she came out of the closet again, and sat down by the fire about ten minutes, Williamson being there; but he then said, "Go in again, you have sat long enough; now you are warm, go in again; you shall not sit here."

He did not offer to fasten her up again that night; but she asking him, whether she should go to bed that night, he told her, that she might make up her bed in the closet, if she would. Accordingly she lay in the closet that night, upon some rags and a sheet, which served her for a bed. But early on Monday morning, about five o'clock, she was taken with a very violent and terrible fit. Her husband, being alarmed by the noise she made, went to her, as did also his daughter. They found her with her face up against the wall, and in violent agitations, blood coming out of her mouth. She continued in this fit about an hour and an half, and afterwards recovering, went to sleep till towards

wards ten in the forenoon. When she waked, she behaved like a mad-woman, calling to Williamson out of the closet, and saying, "Daddy! let me come out." And when Anne Cole afterwards went to speak to her, all she said was, "Daddy! Daddy! I am coming." She continued in this delirious condition till between four and five in the afternoon, when Williamson went to her, and held up her head; but she was then speechless. However, he was still so totally devoid of humanity, that he suffered her to lie in that condition in the closet, without any assistance. He just looked in upon her, as did also his daughter, but her eyes were fixed: and then Williamson, with his daughter, and his two other children, went out to sup with Anne Cole and her husband, who lived in Whitecross-street. Anne Cole, however, offered to stay with the unfortunate woman; and the daughter told her father, that she thought Anne Williamson would not live over the night, and that somebody ought to be with her; but the inhuman Williamson replied, "No, no, never mind." And the unhappy woman remained in this condition in the closet till about five o'clock the next morning, Tuesday the 16th of December, when she expired, and was thereby happily relieved from all her miseries.

The same morning, Williamson sent down to one of the lodgers in the house, informing her that his wife was dead, and desiring that she would come up and look at the dead body. Accordingly this person went up into the room, attended by several of the neighbours, who viewed the body of Anne Williamson, which then lay upon a bedstead. The body was so extremely emaciated, that it appeared more like a skeleton, than any thing else. There were marks round her ancles, and round her wrists and her middle, as if she had been tied with cords.

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There was also the mark of a severe blow on her left cheek, and another on the right side of her forehead; and many lice were crawling about her.

Williamson, in the mean time, seemed not to apprehend himself in any sort of danger about this affair, and made no attempt to abscond. One of the lodgers, who had viewed the body, asked him, why he had not taken her advice, and put his wife into the workhouse, rather than use her in the manner he had done? His reply was, "You may do your best and your worst: I will not fly." However, a general clamour being raised against him in the neighbourhood, he was carried before the sitting alderman at Guildhall the same day, who committed him to Woodstreet Compter; and the coroner's inquest having sat upon the body the 18th of the month, and brought in their verdict Wilful Murder against Williamson, he was thereupon removed to Newgate.

We must, however, observe, that before this, the body of Anne Williamson was viewed by Mr. C——s B——n, a surgeon, in Redcross-street; and he observed a kind of livid-coloured mark upon her left cheek, and the like appearance of a blow on the right side the upper lip; and having turned up the lip, discovered a cut against her teeth, which appeared to be quite through the red part of the lip. The same gentleman also opened her body, after which he gave it as his opinion, upon the whole, that the woman died for want of food.

Notwithstanding this, Williamson still seemed to be very sanguine in his expectations of getting off. However, he before wrote letters, and sent them to such persons as he thought might serve on the coroner's jury, in order to prejudice them in his favour. The following is a copy of one of these

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these letters, which was received by a gentleman, in Williamson's own hand-writing.

" SIR,

" Mine unhappy case makes me to intreat you
 " (as I apprehend you will be on the jury) to be
 " favourable to me ; for I declare myself to be no
 " ways accessary towards her death, notwithstanding
 " the bitter outcries of the people ; for I do
 " declare, I have not used her ill, so as to occasion
 " any marks of violence about her ; and as for
 " victuals, she has always eat more than me : so
 " that her death is natural, as my defence, which
 " I have drawn up, and ordered to be given to the
 " gentlemen, will make appear.

" I am, SIR,

" Your humble servant,

" JOHN WILLIAMSON."

The following is the defence which he drew up, referred to in the preceding letter, and which is also taken from the original.

" GENTLEMEN,

" Never was man more injured than I am at the
 " present, by a set of base people, who have raised
 " a calumny on me, without any sure ground for
 " so doing ; which makes me take up my pen, to
 " offer something to prove my innocence. First,
 " I am accused of violently beating her, so as to
 " occasion her death. To which I answer, That
 " she has not had a slap from me for some months.
 " Indeed, when we have had words together, she
 " has shrieked out, Murder ! I shall be killed ! I
 " am all of a gore blood ! when at the same time
 " I

" I have not touched her, nor been near her by
 " some yards; which can be proved by Mr. and
 " Mrs. Cole, who are ready to answer, So help
 " me God. The next thing they accuse me with,
 " is starving of her. To which I answer, That
 " she had always plenty; and if I thought she had
 " not enough, she had more, if she chused it: so
 " that I am conscious to myself she never wanted;
 " which my above-named friends, as well as others,
 " will justify. As for her being so emaciated, it
 " is owing to those fits which she has been accus-
 " tomed to for some years past. I have been mar-
 " ried to her this seven or eight months; and I do
 " assert, that she has had ten or twelve of those
 " almost every day; which has wore her to that
 " spectre which she now appears to be. About
 " six months ago, she had a most violent fit, so
 " that she wetted two towels with blood and
 " phlegm. I then sent for Mr. Arnold's man,
 " When he came, he said he never saw any worse
 " than she was, to be alive; and those fits would
 " soon carry her off; for he did not think she
 " would live two days longer. For the founda-
 " tion of her disorder was this: she had not the cus-
 " tom of women in the natural way; for they
 " flew into the head; which occasioned those fits.
 " As I have related the truth, as I am to answer
 " to my God, I hope you will impartially con-
 " sider my unhappy case.

" I am, GENTLEMEN,

" Your submissive servant,

" JOHN WILLIAMSON."

Williamson was brought to his trial on Friday the 16th of January, 1767, being indicted, at the sessions house in the Old Bailey, for the wilful murder of Anne his wife, by confining and imprison-

ing her, from the 21st of November till the 16th of December, and denying her proper sustenance. The principal witnesses against him were, Elizabeth Farrington, who lodged in the same house, Anne Hart, and his own daughter, Mercy Williamson. The evidence against him was strong and full; and he was, therefore, found guilty by the jury.

In the course of the trial, he made a short defence, but in which the greatest part of what he said was little to the purpose. He insisted, however, that he always furnished his wife with the necessaries of life; but said, he confined her on account of her frightening his children when he was absent. He alledged several other instances of his wife's misbehaviour; but affirmed, that she was not tied up one night during the whole month, though his own daughter swore, that she was fastened up night and day during the whole time. His defence, however, being entirely unsatisfactory, and unsupported by any proper evidence, availed him nothing: and immediately after the Jury had brought in their verdict against him, he received sentence to be executed on the Monday following, and afterwards to be dissected and anatomized. His daughter gave her evidence against him with trembling, and with tears; but notwithstanding that, as soon as he had received sentence, he turned to the court, and said, "My death is owing to that wicked devil, my daughter." And from the time of his receiving sentence, to the time appointed for his execution, he could not be brought to any acknowledgment of his guilt.

The beadles belonging to the several wards at the east end of the town, were ordered to give notice to the constables to attend at Newgate by eight o'clock, on the morning appointed for his execution, which was Monday, the 19th of January.

nuary. And accordingly the sheriff, constables, and proper officers, being assembled, about nine o'clock Williamson was conveyed in a cart from Newgate to Moorfields, that place being pitched upon for the execution, on account of its nearness to the place where the cruel and tragical affair for which he was now to suffer, had been transacted. The gallows was erected in the center, fronting Chiswell-street. He was attended by two clergymen of the church of England, and a Methodist teacher, who prayed by him for near a full hour. It was with difficulty that the clergymen could prevail upon him to make any acknowledgment of his guilt: but at last, a short time before the cart drew away, he was prevailed upon to confess, that his cruel treatment of his wife had been the cause of her death. Upon which one of the clergymen addressed himself to the spectators, who were exceedingly numerous, and acquainted them with this; and also that Williamson owned, that his disorderly life had been the principal means of bringing him into that unfortunate situation, and that he hoped the people would pray for his soul. The cart soon after drew away, and Williamson having hung the usual time, was cut down, and carried to Surgeons Hall, to be anatomized, agreeable to his sentence. He was a tall, thin man, and, at the time of his death, about forty-six years of age.

Such was the end of John Williamson, who thus most deservedly fell a sacrifice to public justice, and the laws of his country. And having thus brought our narrative to a conclusion, we might here dismiss the Reader: but we will first take the liberty of making two or three remarks. There are few instances of such savage tyranny

and unfeeling cruelty in the married life, as that which is related in the preceding pages: and, indeed, it is necessary, for the honour of humanity, that there should not. We may, therefore, presume, that it is needless to caution any man to avoid such practices as those of Williamson. We have too good an opinion of the humanity of our countrymen, in general, to suppose this at all necessary. Our remarks, therefore, shall be of a more general nature.

Matrimonial unhappiness is frequently occasioned by faults on both sides; though, in the affair of Williamson and his unhappy wife, the fault seems to have been almost entirely on the man's side: for he evidently married her for no other reason, but on account of the little money she had; and whenever that is the case, unhappiness may be considered as the natural consequence, though the event may not often be so tragical as in the present instance.

Men are invested with much power over their wives; by nature and by custom, by reason and by law; but no laws, whether divine or human, will tolerate such inhuman tyranny as that which we have related. And the natural and legal power which husbands have over their wives, ought to be exercised with reason and moderation, with kindness, tenderness, and humanity. And in this manner it will be exercised by wise and good men. The husband should love his wife for her good qualities, and be candid and indulgent to her faults and foibles; remembering, that as perfection is not to be found among men, it would be unreasonable to expect it in the weaker sex, to whom nature has, in general, given an inferior degree of mental, as well as of corporeal strength. Wives, on the other hand, should remember, that it is
necessary

necessary to the preservation of nuptial happiness, that they should be lovers of peace, compliant, good-tempered, and obliging; and not apt, on every trifling occasion, to excite noise and clamour, and to irritate their husbands by needless or unseasonable reproaches, by indecent passion, and by intemperance of tongue. If these few rules were to be generally observed, it would, we apprehend, prevent much domestic infelicity; and be the means of making the matrimonial life, which is too often a state of discord and uneasiness, a state of mutual happiness and comfort.

Finally, let every man who reads this narrative remember, that vice of every kind is the certain road to misery: that when once any man begins to deviate from the paths of reason and conscience, of virtue and religion, he knows not where he may stop. Many a man, who has at first been shocked to venture on a slight breach of the laws of morality, has been brought by degrees to the perpetration of crimes which humanity is startled at. In short, the practice of vice is naturally and necessarily productive of unhappiness in the present world, but will more certainly and inevitably lead to the punishments of futurity, which, as they are more terrible and more lasting, are still more justly to be dreaded.



The LIFE, DEATH, ELEGY, and EPITAPH, of poor

OLD SIMON,

WHO Died on Sunday last, in Dyot-street St. Giles's, May 18, 1783, aged 102 Years.

ON Sunday evening last, at ten o'clock died, at his lodgings in Dyot-street St. Giles's, aged 102 years, *SIMON EADY*, commonly known by the name of *OLD SIMON*.

This remarkable man appeared in the streets with a long beard, and a prodigious number of bags tied about him, and by the singularity of his appearance, excited the charity, as well as curiosity, of those who saw him. He was of an inoffensive disposition, and when offended, resented it no further than by walking from his persecutors. In conversation, he had generally an answer, quoted from scripture, for those who questioned him. He was of a good family near Northampton, but a faithless wife, and false friend, made him fix a resolution of abandoning his home and connexions, and gaining a precarious livelihood by the charity of the Public.

He frequently called himself a Prophet, and his last prophecy was fulfilled, for on Sunday he declared to those about him, that he should die at ten o'clock at night, which he accordingly did.

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